

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING

MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2023

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING (ICoA) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christine Goleman, Kim Hunt, Julie Bobitt, Anthony Frazier, Paulette Hamlin, Talat Khan, Britta Larson, Susan Lawler, Sylvia Mahle, Mubarak Mirjat, Phyllis Mitzen, Edgar Ramirez, Susan Vega, Dylan Olthoff (on behalf of Representative Rita Mayfield), Angela McLemore (on behalf of Senator Mattie Hunter)

ICoA MEMBERS ABSENT:

Melvin Grimes, Patricia Marton, Senator Laura Fine, Senator David Syverson, Representative Maura Hirschauer

VISITORS and GUESTS:

Linda Miller, Vice President of Government Programs, TCARE, Inc.

Amy Brennan, Executive Director, Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition

Don Bell, Chairperson, Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING (IDoA) STAFF:

Paula Basta, Director

Becky Dragoo, Deputy Director

Selma D'Souza, Chief of Staff

Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel

Jennifer Hebel, Special Research Assistant, Executive Office

Brian Pastor, Division Manager of Advocacy & Prevention Services

Sandra Pastore, Division Manager of Home & Community Services

Chelsey Peters, Deputy Division Manager of Home & Community Services

Joe Danner, Deputy State Home Care Ombudsman

Sarah Harris, CFO/Budget Director

Glenda Corbett, Special Assistant to the Director on Community Engagement & Equity

Gloria Simmons, Legislative Liaison

Iris Schweier, Public Information Officer

Bonnie Williams, Administrative Assistant II, Office of General Counsel

Latorya Simon, Private Secretary II, Executive Office

Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach

Lisa Dupoy, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations & Outreach

SUMMARY

OPENING:

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Christie Goleman at 10:02 a.m. Roll call was taken by Council Secretary Julie Bobitt and it was determined that a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Christie asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023, meeting. Anthony Frazier entered a motion. Kim Hunt seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

TAILORED CAREGIVER ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL (TCARE):

Linda Miller, Vice President of Government Programs at TCARE, Inc. spoke to the Council about Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral (TCARE). It is a caregiver assessment tool that focuses on individual family caregivers, rather than care receivers, helping to reduce caregiver burnout. This tool is the only patented, Medicaid and ACL (Administration for Community Living) approved caregiver support program. The program's assessment tool helps to identify caregiver stressors and provides tools and resources to support the caregiver. It creates an individualized care plan that helps the caregiver feel more equipped to deal with the high stress levels of their caregiving role. TCARE also provides ongoing support to the caregiver through their Care Specialists. TCARE supports family caregivers across a varied array of caregiving scenarios including aging and dementia, disability, foster care and military care. More information can be found on their website located at <https://www.tcare.ai>.

ILLINOIS FAMILY CAREGIVER COALITION:

Amy Brennan, Executive Director of the Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition (IFCC) spoke to the Council about this new statewide coalition created by the Illinois Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and funded by the Retirement Research Foundation on Aging and Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) to provide support to unpaid family caregivers. Current goals of the IFCC are to assemble statewide advocates and organizations that interact with and support these caregivers to advocate for change in policy for unpaid caregivers. Another goal is to identify current gaps in existing caregiver programs to be able to encourage new and revised policymaking that better supports family caregiving. Communicating through partner stakeholders, legislators and other groups statewide about available resources for unpaid family caregivers and the critical role these caregivers play is also a goal of the coalition this year. They also strive to make family caregivers aware of the many resources available to help them through ongoing statewide outreach and education campaigns. Any person or organization interested in participating in the IFCC's efforts can reach out by contacting Amy by email at amy.brennan@ageoptions.org.

ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON LGBTQ AGING:

Don Bell, Chair of the Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging, spoke to the Council about the work and mission of the Commission. He explained that this is the first commission in the nation that

has been legislatively established to deal with the issues surrounding aging as an LGBTQ senior. The Commissions goals are to locate LGBTQ residents statewide and assess how well they are being served by current agencies and policies. The Commission wants to establish a statewide support system, in conjunction with many other agencies in the state, for an unseen, unheard and underserved community. The Commissions end goal is to make aging LGBTQ Illinoisans know that they, as community members, are going to be safe, recognized, heard, honored and well served by the State of Illinois.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

Director Paula Basta provided the Council an overview of the FY24 final budget. IDoA is a small agency of approximately 150 people but has a budget of \$1.6 billion. For the FY24 budget that starts on July 1, 2023, the Agency will see a 12.6 percent increase overall for programming with \$49.5 million to be used to increase the rate for essential in-home care workers. There is also \$8 million to maintain the current level of home delivered meals which are still at the pandemic high of over 800,000 home delivered meals per month. There is also a \$1.3 million increase earmarked to assist with gaps in senior services, as well as \$1.2 million increase for IDoA outreach programs. The top three strategic priorities for IDoA in FY 24 are education, outreach and training. Raising awareness of the availability of IDoA funded programs and services provided to assist the disabled and aging senior population is critical. Sarah Harris, IDoA CFO, encouraged the Council to advise the Fiscal Division on any and all ideas and suggestions they may have on improving programs and services for the planning of the FY25 budget as that process has already begun.

Director Basta also advised the Council that the Fall Conference will be held on October 3 and 4 and will be an in-person event held at the University of Illinois Springfield campus. The Illinois State Fair will be holding Senior Day on Monday, August 14 as well, with lots of activities, entertainment and useful information for our seniors to enjoy.

Gloria Simmons, IDoA Legislative Liaison, updated the Council on the newest initiative that has been passed by Illinois legislators, HB 2858 - Aging Suspicious Death. It amends the Adult Protective Services Act by allowing any person to report information about the suspicious death of an eligible adult to an agency designated to receive such reports. It also updates the definition of abuser and abuse to help to more accurately streamline reporting and actions taken by response services.

Brian Pastor, IDoA Division Manager of Advocacy and Prevention Services, updated the Council on the recent activities of the APS division. Brian added to Gloria's reporting on the Aging Suspicious Death bill explaining that the definition of abuser was expanded to add that the abuser must have a 'continuing relationship with the eligible adult.' This bill added a reporting requirement as well as indemnification for those reporting in good faith. It also added the investment advisor to the list of mandated reporters as financial exploitation is the top reported abuse type in the 60 years of age and older population. Another change the bill implemented was to allow access to APS records for the appointed guardian without a court order having to be obtained, thus allowing the client to get into a safe situation more quickly.

Brian also updated the Council on an expansion to the APS training team. IDoA has hired a Training Administrator and two Training Specialists that will be tasked with revising and streamlining the APS training program to allow certified caseworkers to get into the field more quickly. The new team will develop quality webinars for the APS network, as well as implementation of recertification trainings for certified APS investigators at all 36 contracted provider agencies. Brian then went on to add that a new Quality Assurance team has also been implemented adding a Quality Assurance Administrator and two Quality Assurance Specialists to the IDoA APS staff. Their focus will be solely on the quality of service that APS provides to clients. They will use annual audits, plans of correction for deficiencies, case audits, and quality monitoring of new providers to reach their goals.

Brian made the Council aware of a new federal funding stream that will soon be available to all states for APS. The details of the new program are still in process and are awaiting clarification, but it is thought that the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS) will be expanded. Illinois APS will be participating in the public comment period and seeking feedback from the network, including the Illinois Council on Aging, to ensure these changes will be in the best interest of the clients. IDoA's APS division is looking forward to the finalization of this new federal program and expects it to allow for positive enhancements as well as continued development and advancement of the APS program into the future.

Becky Dragoo, IDoA Deputy Director, updated the Council on the recent change to the Medicaid asset level. On May 12, the Medicaid asset limit went from \$2000 to \$17500 which makes it consistent with the Community Care Program (CCP) asset limit. This increased asset limit will allow more vulnerable older adults to become eligible for the Medicaid program. Another change that occurred on May 12 was the end of continuous enrollment that was put in place during the covid pandemic. IDoA is adamant about educating our older adults, their caregivers and advocates about what these changes can mean for them. Assistance is being given on Medicaid enrollment and the redetermination process so individuals do not lose their coverage. Education is also being disseminated to dispel many stereotypes surrounding Medicaid, personal assets, insurance coverage, as well as in-home services with the intention of helping older adults see how they can benefit from Medicaid enrollment.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Director Basta also reminded everyone that this year marks the 50th Anniversary of IDoA. IDoA was formed on November 9, 1973. As plans are finalized, more information will be coming at a later date about upcoming celebrations of this achievement.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Christie Goleman thanked everyone and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Julie Bobitt, Secretary

Illinois Council on Aging